681 flicts and illegal acts which brought official action were few (outside of property suits, which are not considered here). The following is the calendar of cases placed on the records from October 9 to December 3.

[683] October 9. A man knocked down a child and hurt her head. He was placed in jail overnight.

681 October 12. A man was drunk and disor-
689 derly. He was placed in jail (no term indicated).

October 15. A man was drunk and disorderly. He was placed in jail overnight.

October 16. A drunken man broke onto a house. He was placed in jail until the eighteenth.

October 22. A woman was "disobedient" (probably disorderly conduct of some sort). She was placed in jail overnight.

681 November 3. A man raped a young woman,
[684] his second offense. He was placed in jail until
[183] the 10th. It should be observed that according to Cherán ideas a properly brought up girl whose parents looked after her as they should would never have been in a situation where rape would be possible.

[685] December 3. A man "abused confidence" by trying to register a piece of land as his own which actually belonged to his mother-in-law. He was put in jail overnight.

The above cases do not include those which involved fines of less than one peso nor cases which came before the judge.

579 Despite the fact that Cherán has a bad reputation in other towns for violence, there seem to be relatively few serious fights. Drunks often fall to fisticuffs, usually ineffective, but knife fights are rare and the use of firearms is even more unusual. In ordinary times there is probably not more than one killing a year. However, a very serious affair occurred shortly before the close of the study.

At a wedding the new priest appeared after the drinking was well under way. He reproved the people soundly for their excessive drinking and urged them to go home. One of the men, who was already very drunk, took the priest's words to heart and started home. Crossing the bridge to the *barrio* of Parícutin, he was shot from ambush and killed. That night the *ronda* went from house to house asking for certain persons, but up to the time the study closed

579 nothing had been done. Probably more than personal motives lay back of the killing, but it was impossible to discover them.

583 Marriage customs are another frequent source of conflicts reaching the mayor. Ordinarily a boy "kidnaps" the girl he is going to marry. The kidnapping is public and usually nothing is done about it, but the boy may be forced to marry the girl if he does not go through with the ceremony in a reasonable time. Occasionally, though, the girl's relatives make so much commotion that the mayor has [683] to act. If the kidnapping has been "legitimate," that is, the boy intends to marry the girl, usually the men participating in the kidnapping are thrown in jail for 2 or 3 hours and released with an admonition, almost certainly given with tongue in cheek.

583 In other cases the matter may become more 684 serious, especially if it is exploited by the girl. One example will illustrate the situation.

A boy stopped to talk with a girl of dubious morals. When he left, she followed him, saying she was going home with him. The boy ran away and hid. Later in the day the girl's parents came to the mayor and claimed the boy had kidnapped the girl. The boy was ordered

[text continues on top of p. 116b]

RELIGION AND CEREMONIAL

771 Religion in Cherán revolves about the church and the formalized practices and beliefs associated with it. In addition, there is a lively belief in witchcraft, plus a body of miscellaneous and unorganized beliefs and customs. In the main, the organized ceremonials, aside from those associated with life crises, which are dealt with in another section, are linked with the church and are group or community affairs. The ceremonials and rituals connected with witchcraft and miscellaneous beliefs are primarily individual in character and are not organized in any way, although there is a certain gradation between the two types of ceremonial with respect to organization.

794 The church ceremonials and rituals are of 796 four types. Central to the system are those church rituals and ceremonies which follow more or less conventional Mexican Catholic lines and are wholly under the direction of the

[text continues on middle of p. 116b]

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.116]
Sierra Tarascans

583 to marry the girl by a certain date. He failed
684 to do so, as he wished to marry another girl and knew also that the girl laying the charges visited a house of assignation. He was thrown in jail. Later, his mother went his bond and he was released. The boy fled town and had not returned several months later. His mother was put in jail overnight but was released the next day.

123 The preceding discussion is a very unsatis-
671 factory treatment of conflict situations and law. Information on the unformalized personal and familial conflicts is very scanty. Intimate day to day knowledge of households which would produce such information is extremely difficult to secure in Cherán. On the other hand, not enough detailed material was secured on the types of conflicts reaching the *municipio* to make possible any adequate statement regarding legal concepts. In theory, the law in Cherán is Mexican law. Enough examples have perhaps been given to indicate that much of the justice dispensed in the *municipio* is according to informal and generally accepted rules. Only observation of a very large number of cases would permit abstracting the principles on which action is based.

RELIGION AND CEREMONIAL

794 priest. The Mass, Rosary, confession, baptism,
796 confirmation, and so on all fall in this category. A more or less conventional church organization headed by a priest is almost solely responsible for these ceremonies. Associated with
575 this part of the religious organization are the various societies, such as those of the Sacred Heart, Daughters of Mary, Apostles of Saint Joseph, and the Third Order of Saint Francis. Linked with the church organization in part is the *cabildo* or the ačes.

796 Forming a mixture of church and community
529 ceremonials are the fiestas. The organization of fiestas is related to the political organization and, aside from the Mass and strictly church rituals, the fiestas are essentially secular celebrations centering round a religious object.

796 The *mayordomías* are the third important type of religious ceremony and are connected with the church through the *carguero* system and

842 no remedies are taken for barrenness. Others reported that women speak to the professional midwives, who give them herbal remedies, [278] anoint the abdomen with mountain lion grease, or give stew made of mountain lion meat. However, none of the midwives reported any such practices.

847 Despite these attitudes, belief exists that pregnancy can be prevented or abortion caused. It is believed by some that only families of poor economic standing who already have two to four children attempt to use these methods. Others suggest absence of love in the home as a reason; some women carrying on illicit affairs are believed to practice abortion. A good many people seem to know of the existence of abortion and to have knowledge of the herbs used. Consequently attempted abortion probably is more frequent than people wish to admit. The [842] ideal of Cherán is the large family; people prefer not to talk about those who do not share the ideal and some refuse to talk about it. It is also said that the municipal officials are vigilant in punishing such cases, but as the penalty is [684] said to be a fine of $1.00 or $1.50 or a night in jail after recovery, this probably would not be a great deterrent even if the danger of detection were great.

847 Four plants are named as being taken to cause abortion. One, *artamisa*, taken with 278 plenty of salt, was mentioned by one of the midwives. Another admitted to using iris root for this purpose, although generally the midwives claim to be opposed to abortion. The two plants most used, however, are *ruda* and *gobernadorcillo*, KUASA. It is possible that these are the same plants; at least descriptions of their use appear to be the same. If they are effective (and local medical men are sharply contradictory in their opinions), many unintentional abortions are probably caused, for *ruda* is a regular remedy for stomach pains. It is not taken, except intentionally, when pregnancy has occurred, as the herb is widely known as producing abortion. The herb is also believed to be helpful to women who have been unable to have children.

Much the same accounts were given of [842] *gobernadorcillo*. To have children, the herb is cooked with a tablet of chocolate and taken just before the menstrual period is expected.